

Appln. No.: 09/373,230
Amdt. dated: May 19, 2008
Reply to Office Action of February 21, 2008

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-17 (Cancelled).

18 (Currently amended). An isolated variant of interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, which IFN- γ production inducing protein has an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, where the Xaa in SEQ ID NO:2 is Met or Thr, wherein said variant thereof has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 except that (i) one or more amino acids in SEQ ID NO:2 are replaced with other amino acids, and/or (ii) ~~one or more amino acids are~~ acid is added to the ~~N- and C-termini in~~ amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, ~~and/or (iii) one or more amino acids in the N- and C-termini in~~ SEQ ID NO:2 are deleted, while retaining IFN- γ production inducing ability, said variant inducing IFN- γ production when administered to mouse and rat, exhibiting a single protein band when electrophoresed on sodium dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE), and having a molecular weight of 19,000 \pm 5,000 daltons on gel filtration and SDS-PAGE.

19 (Previously presented). A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and, as an active ingredient, the variant of claim 18.

Claims 20-23 (Cancelled).

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24(New). An isolated interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein, excluding a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, which can be administered to mammals selected from the group consisting of mouse, rat, hamster, rabbit, dog, and cat to induce IFN- γ production; and which binds to a monoclonal antibody specifically binding to the polypeptide.

25(New). A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and, as an active ingredient, the isolated interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein of claim 24.

26(New). An isolated variant of interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, which IFN- γ production inducing protein has an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, where the Xaa in SEQ ID NO:2 is Met or Thr, wherein said variant thereof has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 except that (i) one or two amino acids in SEQ ID NO:2 are replaced with other amino acids, and/or (ii) one amino acid is added to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, while retaining IFN- γ production inducing ability, said variant inducing IFN- γ production when administered to mouse and rat, exhibiting a single protein band when electrophoresed on sodium dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE), and having a molecular weight of 19,000 \pm 5,000 daltons on gel filtration and SDS-PAGE.

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27(New). A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and, as an active ingredient, the variant of claim 26.